



*LAW #4 - LAW OF KNOWING  
GOD'S WILL*

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4 Biblical Laws | January, 2018

Father God, thank you for an opportunity to teach. And Lord, I pray, uh, that this would be really practical. I hope Holy Spirit, that it could be helpful. Um, Lord, some right now are in the middle of having to make a massive decision for their life, where they're gonna go to college, who they're gonna marry, if they'll start a company, if they'll take a job, if they'll quit a job, if they'll relocate, if they'll continue with a relationship, or they'll remove themselves from a relationship. Lord, lots of decisions are being made. And Lord, for some, there's big decisions that are on the horizon, uh, decisions that, that they don't fully know the details surrounding or what the outcome might be. And Lord, when those seasons come, we all can get a little anxious, a little stressed. Some of us can get a little, uh, depressed, and some of us feel a little bit overwhelmed. And so, uh, Lord, would you please help us to learn how to, uh, know your will so we could walk in your will so you could walk with us, that we could walk without fear and that we could walk with hope for a future that you would have for us. In Jesus' name. Amen. Um, well, so the basis of the talk today is, uh, a season of my life where my family and I had to make a whole bunch of decisions. Uh, we had, uh, decided that it was time for us to transition. And so we had five kids. Uh, they're now four teenagers. We had five kids and they were elementary, junior high, high school and college. And we'd lived in one city our whole life. That's where my wife and I had met, and all of our relatives were there. And, and we felt it was time to transition. And then the question was where, so then you pull out a map of the earth and you realize that's a little overwhelming. The number of options that I've got. What are we gonna do? I don't know. Didn't have a, a clear job offer opportunity at that point, had some possibilities, but didn't make the transition, uh, because it was a revelation of the next step. Sometimes you, you know, oh, this is the next step, so I'm gonna take it. Other times it's, I don't know what the next step is. I just know that I need to transition and then pivot and figure out what's next. And that's where we were. And we had to decide, okay, what state are we gonna live in? What city are we gonna live in? Where are the kids gonna go to school? What will the price point be? What will the next job be? Literally, it was like life was a snow globe that got shook and everything went up, and you're not sure when or how or where everything's gonna come down. And, uh, it was in that process that we had to really discern God's will, God, what is your will for us? And, uh, and so I wanna share some of that with you. And I'm assuming that some of you are in a season where you're making decisions or you're on the brink of making decisions. And when we do, uh, if we don't know God's will, it, it can lead to a tremendous amount of anxiety. So, uh, six ways to discover God's will, uh, firstly is God's word. God's word, um, is the primary way that God reveals his will. Sometimes people say, man, I wish I could get a word from God. Well, this is the word of God. And from the word of God, you get a word from God. And, uh, a lot of what, uh, you need to know, most of what you need to know for your decision making is in the scripture. Two Timothy three 16 says, all scripture is God, breathe and profitable for teaching, rebuking, correcting, training, and righteousness so that the man of God or person of God is equipped for every good work. So it doesn't matter what decision you're making or what work you're doing, God's word will speak to it either pointedly or principally, sometimes very pointedly. God's word will tell you, like, I was dealing with somebody not long ago, and they said, I'm married and I'm a Christian. My spouse is a Christian, but I've met somebody else and I'd rather be with them. What do you think God's will is? Well, I was reading this book and it says, no, you know, it's, it's just what it says. So no, the answer is no. God's word speaks to that pointedly. Other times, God's word will speak to things principally. And the more you get to know God's word, you get to understand God's principles and the principles will help make those decisions for you. Uh, the next issue is really one of, uh, general revelation. And what general revelation is, it's less specific than scripture, revelation, uh, is how God speaks to us, makes His will known to us. In Romans chapter one and two, it speaks of two types of general revelation creation, externally and conscience. Internally, creation externally is how God made the world. There are certain things that we know that it's God's will because that's how God made the world, and that's how the world works. That's how things operate. So you could go to a doctor and say, okay, I wanna know God's will. You know, what does, what does science say about wellness and health? Um, it's, it's a way of using general revelation or what's called common grace that's available to all people, and it's a way of helping make decisions. It also talks there in Romans one and two about your conscience internally. Uh, your conscience is a compass that God has given you for decision making, and

it helps you determine right and wrong. And so something may be not a sin, but it would be a violation of your conscience. And so when it comes to making decisions, you don't wanna violate God's word. You also don't want to act foolishly against the world and how God made it. And you also don't wanna violate your conscience because that could be God speaking to you about his will for you. Well then in addition, there's prayer prayers where we talk to God and we listen to God. And I would say at the very least, all of your decisions need to include prayer. And it's not just making your decision and asking God to bless it. It's actually inviting God in to help discern his will and make the decision. And that includes praying with the people that are involved, having people that love the Lord praying for you, so that there is an intercession on your behalf for the decision you need to make. So when Grace and I were making our decisions, we were in the word, we're doing our research through general revelation. That's how a lot of research comes to be, by the way. It's through general revelation. So for us, it was, okay, where do we wanna be? And, uh, we decided, well, here are our biblical priorities based on God's word. You know, we all wanna walk with Jesus. We want our marriage to be strong. We want our kids to be set up for flourishing. We want the family to be able to stay intact. So God's word set for us some priorities. Well then it was general revelation. Let's go do the homework. Where are these things possible? And uh, you know, I I, I wanted sun and we wanted to be on the West Coast and wanted the kids to have a college nearby and a place where relatives could come visit during the winter months. And so there were some things that, that as we sought the Lord and prayed, they weren't demands, but they were hopes of our heart. Um, and general revelation helped us narrow it into the greater Phoenix Valley. Um, the research indicates that this would fit the kind of priorities that we believe God has for our family. Well then it was a matter of prayer. Grace is praying. I'm praying the kids are praying, family, friends, people that we trust, pastors in our life, they're praying as well. And then we start looking for is providence. And, and sometimes God works through his visible hand of miracle. He shows up in a supernatural, you know, extraordinary way. Uh, and so, you know, hey, there's an angel. That bush is on fire and talking to me. You know, that's different. Uh, and that's God's speaking in a supernatural revelation. Uh, sometimes though God works through his invisible hand of providence. This is where God works through circumstance. This is where God is ordering things in such a way that he's putting people in circumstances and opportunities in your path. And that's part of his revelation of his will. And you need to be paying a little bit more attention to see that. And, and for some of you, you're hyperspiritual you'll read sort of God into everything. Don't necessarily do that. Not everything is a divine, you know, magical. Where's Waldo game? And there it is. You know, it's not, everything has some significance attached to it. Um, I'll give you the weirdest one I've ever had. I, I told a joke in a sermon many, many years ago that my son had a dream about a panda bear. And honestly, I think it was 'cause we watched Kung Fu Panda. And, and this woman came up and she said, well, based upon your son's prophetic dream, I believe that was the Lord calling me to be a missionary to China. And they're symbolized by the panda. So I've quit my job and I'm leaving the country. I was like, I don't, I don't think that was it. You know, like that. I mean, that's literally what she told me. So my son watched kung fu panda and had a dream about a panda bear. And she decided that she would move to China and, and to reach Chinese people, I was like, you know, it's probably, probably reading a little bit into the Kung fu panda. I don't think Jack Black was initially thinking this was a missionary call. Nonetheless, uh, you can read too much into providence and everything has a supernatural kind of hidden message from God. Or you can overlook God's providence in your life. And so, um, for, for me, I'll give you an example. When we first moved here, uh, school gets out here, you know, earlier and my kids got out later. And so then we moved down, but it was too late to file for schools and we didn't have a place to send the kids to school. And I'm honestly, uh, really kind of anxious dad at that point. 'cause I got elementary, junior high, high school, college. I gotta find a school for everybody. It's too late to register. So we did A-V-R-B-O 'cause we didn't know where we were gonna live. I thought, let's go live in a neighborhood, try it, go to find another vacation rental by owner. Try it. Let's live in multiple places, see where we like before we buy. 'cause if you're buying in the wrong spot, you're kind of stuck. And uh, so we went to register for the kids for school. We couldn't get the kids into schools. All the schools are full. Their schedules would've been very, very different. I remember taking my two kids to one school and, uh, the daughter got out of the car and the son refused to. He's not a

defiant kid. He is just like, this isn't happening. Little kid had a lot of fears associated with going, refused to go. I took the junior high son to a school. They said, we're full, but you can show up on opening day and if something opens up, then he can go. We sat in the library all day and nothing opened up. We went to another school, sat in their library all day, nothing opened up. I'm like, well, in the providence of God, I have two kids that can go. One won't get out of the car. And then I don't have a school for my high school son and my junior high son. We keep sitting in the library and all the schools are full and we can't go there. So I could say it's God's will that we go here. They're like, it's full goodbye. They're like, well, I guess circumstances have actually contributed to this decision. And then in God's providence, we heard of a school that would work for all of our kids and get 'em on the same schedule, but it was totally full. So we applied and then lo and behold, they opened up a class just for the grade for my son that made us an active family. Ta-da. Now we're on the active list. And the week before school, a kid dropped out of every grade that my kid was in. And I was like, apparently that's our school, because that's the only school that we can actually send our children to. And so, you know, Providence, circumstances work that all out. In addition, we find God's will through wise counsel, uh, find somebody who loves the Lord or has insight and ask them. So before we move to the Phoenix Valley, some pastors invited me down and wanted to meet with me. And I said, well, if I'm gonna put five kids, you know, in a car and move all our stuff to another state, I just want to know that you guys will welcome me, pray for us, and that we'll have some support. And if you won't do that, then I don't want to come. 'cause you know, I've already had enough head-on collisions and a part-time job as a crash test dummy. I feel like I've served my time. And they said, no, we love you. We want you to be here. So they met with me, laid hands, prayed over me, and they welcomed us to the valley. That felt like a confirmation of wise counsel ran it by the pastors in our life and the counselors and the people that we know and love and trust. And they prayed about it and they said, you know what? We think it's a great place for your family is to go to the valley. And, uh, including family members that loved us and didn't wanna see us go, they were part of our wise council. And they said, no, we feel like this is a good move for you. So it's inviting others into the decision making process. And it's not just picking people who agree with you. It's people who love the Lord and want the best for you. And sometimes you discover God's will through supernatural revelation. Sometimes God shows up in an extraordinary way. You don't know. Uh, when I was 19, God spoke to me, said, Mary Grace, preach the Bible. Train men and plant churches. So with this decision, it's say, okay, I need to, you know, love grace. So that was, that's easy. Glad to do that, that preach the Bible. Okay, God's still got a call of Bible teaching on my life trained men. I have a heart for men. Um, and, uh, plant churches. Maybe God's gonna have a go plant another church. That was how he had spoken to me as a young man. And unless he'd rescinded that, uh, I would assume that would stay in place. Sometimes God works through a supernatural way. You have a dream, a word, somebody has a word for you. You want to test all of this by God's word, right? One John, don't believe every spirit, but test the spirits because not every spirit is from God. Um, but ultimately these are some of the contributing ways that God helps us to discern His will. Um, lemme make this really, really, really practical. Uh, next thing I want to talk about is the Father heart of God. If you don't understand the Father heart of God, you'll have a very difficult time understanding the will of God. 'cause it's the will of a dad who loves you. Some of you didn't have a godly dad who loved you, and you may have a father wound. Some of you maybe didn't have a dad at all, or maybe your dad was the one who wounded you. And what can happen if you don't forgive your earthly father and heal up? It affects your relationship with your heavenly Father. Once you know that God is your father in his heart for you, then it becomes a lot easier to understand his will for you. Uh, let me explain it. Here's, here's Jesus saying, uh, ask. So when we're needing to figure out God's will or what's next, ask, and it will be given to you. Seek and you will find knock and it will be open to you. What he's saying is that God wants to help you. God wants to answer your prayers. God wants to reveal his will to you. For everyone who asks, receives, and the one who seeks finds into the one who knocks it will be open. Uh, or to which one of you, if he asks a son for bread, we'll give him a stone. Right? How many of you, you had that dad actually like, dad, can I have a loaf of bread? Here's a rock chew on that. You're like, thanks dad. That was super helpful. Uh, some of you had a cruel dad. You had a mean dad. You had a, a non-res, non generous, non loving dad. And what Jesus is gonna teach us is that our heavenly Father is not like that.

Um, or if you ask for a fish, we'll give him a serpent. If then you who are evil, um, Jesus knows our sin, know how to give good gifts to your children. How much more will your father is in heaven? Give good to things, good things, rather to those who, who ask him God's heart is a father's heart. This is the essence of what Jesus is saying. Part of the way we know God's will is we need to go know God's heart. One of the ways that my kids know what my will is for them is that they know my heart for them. I love them. I'm devoted to them. I their biggest fan. I i want best for them. I, I, I wanna bless them. Jesus is saying that our our our our God is a father. And our father's heart is a loving, generous, helpful, kind heart. That's the Father heart of God. So let me tell you this about God's will, this will be somewhat controversial. I believe there are two basic ways to see God's will. One is something that I will call meticulous providence. And that is that God's will is literally like a tightrope tightrope. You ever been to a circus and you saw the tightrope, you're like, okay, you, you need to be okay. What next? And there's a lot of anxiety. And if you fall, it's over. Some of you see God and his will like a tyro. Um, and, and some will teach something called meticulous providence. And, and the truth is that the Bible does teach meticulous providence for some things. But I don't believe meticulous providence is for all things. Give you an example. Uh, the Bible says that Judas Iscariot was going to betray Jesus for 30 pieces of silver. It says this in the Old Testament book of Zacharia and some meticulous providence is that Judas is the one doomed for destruction, joins the team of Jesus, and just as was prophesied, betrays him for exactly 30 pieces of silver. That is meticulous providence. There are times that God orders the events and everything works according to a very meticulous will. I believe there are other times, and I'll get into this, to where God caress about the direction of our life and he allows a little flexibility in the decisions that we make along the way. I'll give you an example. I went to a Cubs preseason game today. This is a good day for me, okay? And I was standing in line and it came down to the meatballs or the, uh, Chicago dog. Okay? So here I am needing to discern God's will, uh, between the meatballs and the Chicago dog. I didn't feel like I was in a tightrope. And if I picked one instead of the other, the earth would come unhinged and generations would be talking about my failure. I felt like I could go either way. Um, in so far as, as the will of God goes, I believe there are certain things, I'll kind of let you know my principle early. There are certain things that God tells us. There are other things that God says. Huh? Why don't you ask me? Why don't you ask me? Sometimes God says, I'm gonna tell you other times God's gonna say, why don't you ask me? How many of you are you got? Kids you ever tell your kids to do things? Yeah. Other times. Do you ever ask your kids what they want to do? Yeah. And if you don't, please start doing that. Right? What would you like? Right? Um, God's your father. There are times he's gonna tell you, meticulous providence, this is exactly what he wants you to do. There's other times he's gonna say, I don't know. Why don't you ask me? What do you want to do? Do you understand this? This is a relationship with God as Father. And so within that, sometimes there is meticulous providence. God is carefully orchestrating incredibly complex details. There are other times I believe that life is more like a five lane highway. And God is saying, love me. Read your Bible. Be faithful to your spouse. All the stuff that's clear in scripture. And as long as you're going the direction I need you to go. You could do this, you could do that. You could have a meatball sub. You could have a hot dog. You could, you know, work the night shift. You can work the day shift. You can drive that car. You can buy a different car. As long as you love me and you're walking with me and you're going in the direction that I've called you and you're working on your relationship with me, there are a co there are certain decisions that can be made that you can ask me about that I will say yes to as long as you're going the right direction. Does this make sense? Okay. So for me, when it came time, I, uh, I felt that God was still calling me to teach the Bible. I could do that in a preexisting church and take a job as a pastor. I could go plant a church. I could be a conference speaker. There are different ways to teach the Bible. And I kept asking the Lord, Lord, is there one that you want from me? And if so, just tell me. And if not, let me see what I would like to do. And then I will ask you, 'cause you're my dad. And if dad says no, the answer's no. And if dad says yes, the answer's yes. And so sometimes this leads to seeking God's will. Other times it's our relationship with God causing our desires to come to pass. And then asking God. So I'll give you an example. I've got an 11-year-old son that I love with all my heart. And the other night I said, uh, I need you to do your homework and then I'll take you out for dessert wherever you want to go. So I had a command for him, my will for him first was, you

gotta get your homework done. But then it was, you tell me where you want to go to dessert. I don't really care. I love you. I just want to hang out with you. Go have some fun with you, visit with you, and you tell me where you want to go. And I'll take you there. I need you to see that sometimes we get so focused on the will of God that we forget the relationship with the father. And the Father oftentimes is very, very, very concerned about the relationship, not just the decision. You get that how many of you're parents and your kid comes up and like, help me make the decision. Say, okay, I would like to do that. But what I really care about is the relationship. And if we have a growing, loving, healthy communication and relationship, then the decisions that are made will be a lot easier because they'll be made in the context of our loving and healthy relationship. I believe what Jesus is getting at here is you're, you're, you're God's a dad who's good. If you ask him for help, he's not gonna hurt you. If you ask him for wisdom, he's not gonna trick you. If you ask him to reveal his will, so you can walk in it, he will. And ultimately, if you ask him, he'll listen and consider your request. But God is sovereign. God knows the future. God controls the future. God rules over the future. So what we're doing is we're making a request of the one who is sovereign. And he can say no 'cause he's sovereign. But he could say yes if he wants to. He's free to do whatever he wants. I need you to see the Father heart of God. God is not, I don't believe God's will is necessarily like a paint by numbers kit or assembling Ikea furniture that he just hands us. Step one, step two, step three, step four. I believe it's more like a father with a child saying, I love you. Okay, I need you to do this. I need you to do that. I need you to this. What do you wanna do? Well, here, okay, we could do that. Okay, now here, I need you to go here. And it's about the relationship and the father walking with us and helping directing us. And oftentimes he's telling us where to go. And sometimes he's asking us, what do you want to do? This is all, this is all complicated unless you understand the Father heart of God. So lemme keep going. Uh, next slide please. Um, today, okay, good. Uh, are you delighting in God? See, um, Psalm 37, 4, delight yourself in the Lord. Not just God's provision or God's blessing, but who God is. God is good. He's a good father. He's a wonderful father. We love him. We enjoy him. Delight yourself in the Lord and he'll give you the desires of your heart. What doesn't, what this doesn't mean is if you love God, you could do whatever you want. What this means is if you love God, you'll do what God wants you to do. What this means is, as you love God, enjoy God, build your relationship with God, you'll start to have something of God's heart. It won't be your will versus God's will. It'll be you love God because God loves you and you want a relationship with God. 'cause God wants a relationship with you. And as you enjoy that relationship with God, you'll start to have something of his heart. What that means is understanding what you're supposed to do probably won't happen unless you enjoy who he is. And sometimes we get so focused on, I just wanna know what to do. And, and God's like, we'll get there as we spend time together and the relationship deepens as you trust me, as you read my word, as you pray, as you listen, as we build this relationship, you'll start to get my heart. And then you'll love what I love. You'll hate what I hate. And you'll want to do what I want you to do. I'll give you the desires of your heart. Okay? So I'll give you an example of this. I was a brand new Christian, and I had no, in my whole life, I had never had any desire to read the Bible. And then when I became a Christian, um, I started reading a little bit of the Bible and spending time with the Lord in prayer, silence, and solitude, going for walks. I didn't really know how to pray, but I just talked to God like he was my dad. And he could hear me. So I'd be like, that's me. Mark, I assume you know that and I'm a new Christian, thank you. I assume you know that. And I don't really understand how this relationship with you works, but I do want to have a relationship. So I started just literally going for prayer walks and talking to the Lord. And what happened was I started to get a tremendous appetite for the Bible. I really just had this love for the Bible. And what that was is that was God giving me the desires of my heart. I didn't have this desire until God gave me this desire. And all of a sudden I just loved reading the Bible. I can still remember, um, may have told you this story before, but I was a brand new Christian in college and they pass out the clipboard and there's like six or seven or eight or 10 guys' Bible studies. I didn't know. I signed up for all of 'em. I was like, oh, that's a lot. But you know, I'm on team. Jesus, I guess we practice all the time, you know? And so I, and so the poor pastor, he teach all these Bible studies and here I am and I'm at the next one. And about the fifth one, he is like, you know, you don't have to go to a mall. I was like, I didn't know. I didn't know. I said, but I'm gonna keep going. 'cause I like the Bible. Like I don't know what it says, but I

like it and I love it and I wanna learn it. And I'm pretty fired up about the Bible. Okay? And I'll never forget one of my college friends, he said, uh, why do you like the Bible? I said, I have no idea. I said, 'cause I've never liked the Bible. And now I really like the Bible. And I said, uh, I think God must have given me that desire. That was a, that was a God-given desire. And so, you know, to me, you guys are like, how do you increase your love for prayer and love for the Bible? And I said, spend time with the Lord and he'll give you the desires of your heart. He'll give you those desires. So then your will and God's will, they start to align. 'cause God's will becomes your will. God gives you his will. Okay? So, um, are you delighting in God? Here's another weird question. What's your deepest desire? Um, and I need to be careful in this, but, um, I need to be careful with everything. But this, this could get misconstrued. Um, when you become a Christian, God changes you at the level of nature. So the nature of a Christian and a non-Christian are different. There's a theological system that I, i I appreciate. But the first point is the, is total depravity, which explains a non-Christian that your mind will and emotions are infected and affected by sin. But you need to understand, when you become a Christian, you get a new nature. Now, you're not perfect. We're all sinners. We're works in prog progress. But something is happened at the level of nature. What that means is there's a change at the level of desires. This is one of the ways, you know, you became a Christian. Your desires change. Okay? When you're a non-Christian, you want a sin and then you become a Christian. When you do those things you used to do, they make you miserable. That's why the sinning Christian is the most miserable person because you're fighting against your new nature and your desires. So we, we share this here a lot at the growth track, but lemme read it. Galatians 5, 16, 17. But I say Walk by the spirit. You'll not gratify the desires of the flesh. What he says is, your life is either gonna come out of the sinful flesh or the Holy Spirit. It's gonna come out of these endemic, fallen, crooked, rebellious, wicked desires, or it's gonna come out of the Holy Spirit, the person, the presence, the power of God, the same powerful Holy Spirit who empowered the life of Jesus. And so what he's saying is, you know, if you're a non-Christian, all you have is the flesh. So some of you're raising kids and you're like, I can't get them to be obedient. They don't need to be obedient. They need to be saved, and they need to get a new nature. 'cause if all they have is their old nature, you're never gonna get the old nature to be holy. You're never gonna get the flesh to be holy. Okay? The, the, the new nature, the spirit empowers the new nature with the new desires. And then behavior starts to change. So sometimes we worry so much about behavior. God worries about nature. And once the nature changes, then the behavior starts to change. This is what Jesus talks about. A tree and fruit, a good tree, bears good tree to good fruit. A bad tree bears bad fruit. He's, he's talking about nature. He's talking about the essence of who you are, um, for the desires of the flesh or against the spirit or the desires of the spirit or against the flesh. That there's always this conflict that the Holy Spirit's trying to pull you to be more like Jesus. And the flesh is always pulling you to be more like sinful self. For these are opposed to each other. Here's the line that should blow your mind to keep you from doing what the things you want to do. Some of you have been told, don't do this, don't do this. Why? Because you'll go to hell. And you know what? You might, if you don't know Jesus for sure, that's what's gonna happen. What, what is the primary motivation for the believer? If we know that Jesus died for our sins and our penalties already been paid and we're not going to hell, what's to keep us pursuing holiness in the will of God? We want to, we want to, the difference between a believer and an unbeliever can be revealed at the level of deepest desire, right? So if you ask a believer, what do you want? They'll say, well, I want this. Okay, what's your deepest desire? And then what's your temptation? The temptation is the flesh, but the deepest desire. That's the Holy Spirit's power and presence. So I dealt with a guy recently. Um, they're having a lot of marriage problems. So what do you want? He said, I want a divorce. Okay, that's temptation. It's frustrating. I said, okay, what's your deepest desire? He said, I want my wife and I to walk with Jesus and forgive each other and get to the other side of this together. That's the deepest desire. You get that. Now the temptation is the lower, lesser, weaker desire. So what I tell him is, nurture the deepest desire. Paul says it this way, what I wanna do, I don't do what I don't wanna do. That's what I do. He says, I'm so frustrated 'cause my sometimes my weaker desires tempt me. And then they get in the way of my deeper desires. And in that section of Romans, Paul says, who will deliver me from this real dilemma? And then he goes on to talk about the powerful ministry of the Holy Spirit. So, uh, you can go back for one second.

Um, by delighting yourself and the Lord, he'll give you the desires of your heart. And then you start to figure out what your deepest desires are. Um, for me, I want to be a good husband of grace. Um, I really want my kids to know the father's love through their earthly father. Um, I really want to be a good Bible teacher that helps people, okay? At Bedrock, that's what I want. Now, there are days that my wife, uh, don't tell her this, but she annoys me some days, okay? Now, the days that I annoy her are far outweighing the days that she annoys me. Her name is Grace and she needs every bit of it to live with me. I do love my kids and want to be present with them and have a close relationship. There are some days that, um, but let's just say I find them frustrating. Okay? I have five children. So there's five opportunities for this frustration. Um, I really want to be a good Bible teacher. And there are, uh, some days that, uh, that I wish God had given me a different job to do because there's a lot of responsibility that comes with the one that I have, have. Now, there are temptations and frustrations, but if you ask me what's my deepest desire, I wanna love grace, I wanna love my kids, I wanna teach God's word. Like that's the bedrock for me. Those are my deepest desires. And so what I want to do is I want to nurture and feed those deepest desires. And as I do, I find that God's will becomes clear. Okay? Does this make sense? Okay. If, if, if God's deepest desire is for you to pray and read the scriptures and walk in holiness, and that's your deepest desire, if you feed those desires as you go to make decisions, a lot of your decisions will be, you know, my new nature, the power of the Holy Spirit, who I am in Jesus Christ. What do I really want that'll help make my decisions. Does that make sense? I'm gonna force you a lot, not just to rush to the decision. 'cause some of you're very practical and you're like, I got a decision. Make. What's the answer? And God's like, how about our relationship? How about, I'm your dad, you're my kid. How about you delighted me? How about you pay attention to your new nature? How about you build your relationship with the Holy Spirit? How about you follow the deepest desires that I give you, and then we'll get you to the place that you need to be? 'cause God carries a lot about who you are. And once he gets who you are, right, then what you do gets clear. Does that make sense? I know you're looking at me like, uh, it's a little confusing. So let me, let me give you another point. How about this? What do you want? This is a crazy concept. Um, sometimes God tells us what to do and sometimes God asks us what we want to do again. How many of you're a parent? Okay. So like, I'll give you an example. Um, this weekend, grace is outta town at a choir trip with our daughter. My two other boys are out of town for a baseball tournament. My other daughter's in college and I'm home with my 11-year-old son. He's my buddy. I love him with all my heart. So I came to him and I told him my will. I said, my will is to hang out with you little buddy. I call him little buddy, like, uh, Yogi Bear and Booboo. So, hey little buddy, uh, I want to hang out with you. I said, so what do you wanna do? He said, I, I want to go to the Mariner Spring training game. And it's always Chick-fil-A or Firehouse Subs. Really? If one of those isn't in heaven, my son will be very disappointed. 'cause for him, those are very wonderful places to be. So we're gonna end up at Chick-fil-A or Firehouse. He's like Chick-fil-A or Firehouse Subs and a spring training game. Okay? I told him my will. And then I asked him what he wanted. Does this make sense? Jesus does this on occasion. He'll ask people what they want. Oftentimes he tells people what to do. Sometimes he'll ask 'em what they want. Here's one example. Matthew 20:32 through 34. Jesus called him and said, what's the question? What do you want me to do for you? They said to him, Lord, let our eyes be open. You know what, these guys were blind, blind. And Jesus in pity touched their eyes and immediately they recovered their sight and they followed him. Let me say this, um, sometimes when we need to make a decision, we're like, God, what do you want? What do you want? What do you want? Tell me what you want. And God's like, I love you. You're my kid. What do you want? This doesn't change God. This doesn't change God's mind. This doesn't negate God's sovereignty. What what the sovereign is saying is, I'm still in charge. And I could say no, and I'm only gonna do what I want to do. You can't move me or change me. But I am a father. And you can ask me. You can ask me. Lemme say this with my kids. They ask me questions all the time. Um, dad, can we do this? Dad, can we do that? Dad, we do this. Dad, we do that. There are a lot of things they could ask me that I'm totally fine with. The other night, my 11-year-old son, uh, for some reason he's all the illustrations today. He came up, he's like, uh, can we shoot hoops tonight after dinner? Answer is yes. Yeah, okay. And he's like, and could we go get ice cream before that? Yeah, we could do that. And Dad, could I ask you some Bible questions before you tuck me in? 'cause I

was reading, I got questions. Yep. That sounds good too. Yeah, yeah. I'll take you to shoot hoops. Eat ice cream and do a Bible study. You'll do that. Then he asks, can I stay up late and sit in the hot tub? He answer is, Nope, you gotta go to school tomorrow. Sorry little buddy. I'm still the sovereign, right? I'm still the sovereign. And I can say yes or no to the request that you make, but you're welcome to make them. 'cause I'm your dad. I'm your dad. And let me say this, that, uh, that my son now knows my father's heart. So there are times that he'll just come up and ask me questions. And there are times that I will ask him questions. There are times that, that it's okay to say, Jesus, here's what I want. If, if you're delighting yourself in the Lord and getting a lot of time with the Lord and growing in your relationship with the Lord, if you know the Father heart of God and you love God and you honor him as father, and you recognize his authority and his sovereignty and his holiness and his goodness, you're not trying to manipulate him or control him, but you're trying to honor him and make a request to him. Yes, it's okay if you've fed the deepest desires of your heart. If you're walking by the power of the Holy Spirit, if you're really trying to nurture your new nature, then it's okay to go ask your dad by saying kind of, here's, here's what I want. Here's what I want. Now let me say this about, um, God as well. My view of God is that God, um, is a God who does say no, but he likes it when his kids love him and know him and listen to him and walk with him and ask the kind of questions that he wants to respond yes to. Okay? What I don't want is kid, my five kids, I don't want them to just always be trying to use abuse control and manipulate me. I want a relationship where I love them and they love me and I care for them, and they care for me. And they know my heart and they share my heart. And when they make requests of me, they make requests that uh, they know that I'm inclined to say yes to. God's your Father, he caress deeply about the relationship. And once you have the relationship, you have his heart and you know his nature and you know his will for you. So then when you ask, he's inclined to say, yes. Some of you, your view of God is like a red light. Dad. No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no. I think God's more of a green light God. Like, hey, love me. Know me, get to know me and ask things that I wanna say yes to. Okay? Yesterday, my 13-year-old daughter, she, uh, sitting at a baseball game 'cause that's what I do this time of year. And my boys are playing. And she comes up, she's like, can I get a hug? Answer? Yeah. She knows her dad. She knows my heart. She knows that she's asking something that is within my will and something that I'm very happy to say yes to. I'm older. I was like, uh, snack shack's over there. What do you want? What do you want? Okay, I'm, I'm the sovereign. I'm telling her that I want to do something for her. She said, uh, uh, I'd like, uh, you know, a pop and a candy. And I said, yeah. She said, my friend's here and doesn't have any money. Could she have some too? What's the answer? Yeah. Yeah, your friend can. So she grabbed your friend. She's like, come on over. My dad's gonna buy a snack. Okay? So we're standing there and the girls, the girl said, uh, no, I don't need anything. I said, my, my daughter looks at her. She's like, that's not the issue. What do you want? What do you want? She's like, well, what's the cheapest? My my, my daughter's? Like, that's not how it works in our family. You, you get what you want as long as it's a holy good thing. And she said, well, I really wanna pop and I want this and I want that name. Three things. She's like, but I'm sorry. I said, why are you sorry? I love my daughter. I asked her what she wanted and one of the things she wanted, she also wanted No, what you wanted. And I said yes to her. And I said, yes to you. And what you're asking for, I'm totally fine with, and I'm a green light Dad. I'm really happy to say yes. Does this make any sense to anybody? Yes. Does you got God's your father? He's good now. She, my daughter came up. She said, I want to date a non-Christian boyfriend with a motorcycle and a tattoo. Smokes weeded. No, you have, we this, we have relationship problems, right? Like you are asking something that is completely contrary to everything I am. But since you know who I am and I love you and my commitment to you, you're asking things that I want to say yes to. This is where getting to know God and then figuring out God's will for us. It allows us to bring our request to him once we have a relationship with him and we know him. And sometimes Jesus asks, what do you want? Now he could say no, but he's asking what we want. And the truth is, he already knows Well, what he's wanting us to do. He is wanting us to search our own desires and our own heart. Well, what do I want? And why do I want that? And is that a good thing or a bad thing? And am I loving my father? Running my Father? As Jesus turns the question for us. It's not because he doesn't know the answer. He wants us to search our hearts and to, and to evaluate our own answers. I'll give you another one. Um, have you made your

request known to God? I'll make this my, uh, final point. Philippians four, five through seven, uh, the Lord is at hand. Here's what this means. God is close. God is with you. God will never leave you. God will never forsake you. That God's your father and he cares about you. Okay? Do not be what Anxious about anything. Life has a lot of anxiety. And anxiety is what happens when we look in the future and we don't see God being present or good or involved or for us or with us. Um, anxiety is the number one issue that most of us struggle with, by the way. Number one category of prescription medications is antidepressants. People get anxious, they get depressed. But in everything by prayer and supplication, that's the relationship that's talking to God, your father. And with Thanksgiving looking for the places that God's already provided in your life, okay? Mind blow, let what your requests be known to God when it came to move to Arizona. Grace and I and the kids. Lord, where do you want us to go? Providence. Right? Job offer here. Job offer here. Job offer here. Job offer here. Uh, the kids said, uh, let's go to Australia. Said, why? They said we were there and we liked it and it's sunny. But that's a different country. I, I don't know if I wanna do that. Pray about it. Uh, grace and I both like, eh, why is council like, eh, another country? That's kind of a situation. I dunno if we're ready for that, Lord, where do you want us to go? It's quiet, Lord. We'll go wherever you want us to go. Where do you want us to go? And I read this verse and I thought, huh, maybe he's waiting for me to tell him where I want to go. Does that make any sense? 'cause if God tells me to do something, I'll do it. And if he's not saying anything, maybe he's waiting to have a conversation with me. Make your request known to God. So I go to Grace and I said, where do you want to go? She's like, I wanna go to Arizona. She said, where do you want to go? I said, I wanna go to Orange County or Arizona. 'cause Orange County's Arizona with water. That's all it's right. Um, and way more expensive housing. And uh, she said, I don't want to go to Orange County. I said, well, you can let your request be known to God and your husband. You don't want to go to Orange County. I said, I got a good possibility in la. She's like, I don't want to go to la Ask kids, you wanna go to la? They're like, we're not going to la Okay Lord, if you want us to go, you gotta, you gotta like, you gotta say it, man. We all gotta hear it. 'cause I'm outvoted here, six to one. God never told us where to go. I go to Grace. Where do you want to go? She says, I wanna go to Arizona. She says, where do you want to go? I said, I want to go to Arizona. So what we decided was we're gonna make our request known to God. So we both, we sought wise counsel, we prayed, we talked to people, we met with people we care about. We really sought to be accountable, not just, you know, rebellious. And it was like, okay, Lord, you're the sovereign. We don't change you. You change us. We don't inform you. You inform us. But Father, there you go. Make your request known. We'd like to go to Arizona. He said, yeah. I was like, huh, that's pretty great. Now what he'd already been clear about was, love your wife, raise your kids. Teach the Bible care for people, right? All the stuff that the Bible's really clear about. So that was not up for discussion, but where to do that? That was the decision that we needed to make. And we made our request known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Here's what he's saying. There's reason for anxiety. You and I, uh, when there's decisions to make or a future we don't know. And God, what's gonna happen? How's this gonna work out? And what are the consequences? We try to be the sovereign. We try to control everything so that we get the outcome we want. Or we have a view of God that he's not sovereign and good. So we try and manipulate him so that we can control him to get the outcome we want. And what he's saying here is, the Lord is at hand. The number one command in the Bible, it appears about 150 times, is fear not. I've looked at everyone and oftentimes in the same orbit it says, do not be afraid for I am with you. I'll never leave you nor forsake you. Uh, the Lord is at hand. And what that means is we don't need to know everything. We need to stay close to our father who knows everything. Lemme close with another story about my little buddy. Um, I've used this analogy before, um, but some years ago, we're gonna take a trip to Scotland. He was a little guy. I don't know if he was Maybe just a couple years old. He was a little guy. And so I told the family, Hey, we're the old Driscolls. We're Irish. We're Scottish. We're gonna go to Scotland. Daddy's gotta preach, but we're gonna go to the John Knox's church and we're gonna go to the royal mile. We're gonna see castles. You're going to go to John Knox's grave, uh, where they wrote the Scots Con. Like I'm selling it, the Scot's confession. I'm selling the whole thing. You're gonna go on a airplane, you're gonna ride in a

doubledecker bus, you're gonna ride in a black cab. And I tell the kids and they're like, woo. And my littlest buddy Gideon, every time he just got defined, he said, I'm not going. I said, but buddy, this is my will for you. I'm your dad. You need to obey me. You're going to Scotland. He's like, I'm not going. You got more to find. And he's a really compliant, joyful, godly, wonderful little kid. And finally, I, so I get down, I start selling it, man. And I'm like, but you're gonna see a castle. He is like, I'm not going. You, you're gonna be on a plane. You hit a button, they bring you juice. That's amazing, right? Your mom doesn't even let you drink juice. They're gonna bring it every time you hit the button. He's like, I'm not going. I was like, buddy, Don't you wanna go to the royal mile? I show 'em all the photos on the internet. I said, this is my will for you. My will is that you'd get on the plane. My will is that you would go to, you know, Scotland. My will is that you would get in the cab. My will is that you would go to the castle. My will is that you would go to the royal mile. He's like, I won't go. I'll never forget. I got down and I looked. Him in the eyes was like, little buddy, if I go and I don't have you with me, that's gonna break my heart. 'cause you're my little buddy and I love you. And I was looking forward to going with you. Here's what he said. Oh, you're going? I said, yeah, little buddy. I'm going. He's like, well, I didn't know you were going. I said, yeah, I'm gonna go. He's thinking, I gotta figure out where the airport is. I gotta go through customs. I gotta straight out my passport when I get there. I gotta trade, trade my money into whatever the Scottish money is. I gotta find something called a black cab. I gotta book a double decker bus tour. I gotta find the royal mile. I gotta figure out where John Knox is buried. I gotta go find some castles. I'm three. Right? What that is is, uh, anxious. Right? But that was my will for him. My will for him was good. Only if I went with him. As soon as he realized I was going with him, what was an awful fearful future. Became a fun adventure with his dad. Okay? So here's what I want you to know. God's will is really important. And the first thing among God's will is that you would be his kid. And that you would realize whatever he has for you, he's gonna go with you. Right? And so, man, I, I remember at that time I stood up and I took Getty's hand and I said, little buddy, we're gonna do this together. He's like, all right dad, we did it together. I see my father like that. Dad, I want to go to Arizona. Alright dad, I have no idea where my kids are gonna go to school. I don't know where we're gonna get a house. I don't know if I can get a job. We may need a building. I don't, I don't have a building, right? Um, dad, there's a whole lot of stuff. Like I just don't know. And Dad, you haven't told me what your will is for me. I mean, you have told me your will is to love grace and preach the Bible and raise these kids and the things that the Bible is clear on, but the specific details of how and where, dad, I don't know. And since you haven't told me. How about I tell you I'd like to go to Arizona and do it there. And I, I feel like Dad said, I'll go to Arizona with you lots to be afraid of. And here's how I see it. I'm just his little buddy. I'm a grown man who's just God's little buddy. Somebody asked me, they said, how are you doing in the middle of all this? I said, I don't know. I just know I'm in the will of God. I know that God's my father. I know that he loves me. I know that he's gonna take care of me, and even if I make a mistake, he can redirect my course and get me outta trouble. I said, you know what? I'm really concerned about God's will. But what I'm most concerned about is God's hand. I just wanna walk with him. I wanna stay close to him. I wanna listen to him. I wanna know his heart. I wanna be like father, like son. I wanna be like my dad. And I think if the relationship is solid and I'm walking closely with him, his will for me will be very clear and I'm not gonna go alone. Does that make sense? Okay. Uh, father, thanks for an opportunity to teach. And Lord, I confess these are, these are thoughts I'm working on and these are things that I've experienced and they're still something I'm noodling on. Lord, I pray, uh, that nothing I say would give any impression that you're not sovereign in charge of all things and people that you don't have foreknowledge of the future. You have complete knowledge of the past, present, and future. God, in no way do I want to give the impression that we change you or control you or manipulate you. You change us, you rule over us. Uh, but Lord, somehow in your great mystery, you say you're a father. And what that means is we can talk to you and we can bring our request to you. And somehow in the mystery of it all, you'll listen to us and you'll hear us, and you'll respond to us and you'll walk with us. Father, father, thank you for your word that most of what we need to know is really clear. Thank you for your Holy Spirit, that he works through conscience and creation to help us figure out, uh, some more details of your will. Thank you for wise counsel, uh, that people can help guide our steps and give us wisdom and keep us from really foolish decisions. And,

uh, father, I just thank you that, that your will is connected to your heart. Um, that Lord, you don't want to just stand back at a distance and tell us what to do. You want to take us by the hand and you wanna walk with us through it. And Lord, some of us are older and some of us are younger, but we all need a father. We need a father who is in charge. We need a Father who is wise. We need a father who is helpful. We need a father who knows what we don't know and, and can take us where we need to be. And heavenly Father, I just pray for us that this would be a, a real sacred moment to reflect on you as Father. And that through that relationship with you, reading your word, praying, worshiping, spending time with you, that we would have our hearts change and our deepest desires, nurtured and delighting ourselves in you, that you would give us your desires, which are our desires in our heart. And Lord, I thank you for the gift of children, um, that when we become parents, um, and as we interact with our children, we realize that as the children of God, our relationship with you is kind of like that. Uh, that when you have something for us, Lord, you're gonna tell us. And there are times that your will is just to hang out with us and build a relationship, and you're willing to walk with us and, and you want to hear from us, and you want it to be a process where you're not just telling us what to do, but you're shaping who we are. And so, I, I pray for us, Lord God, that, uh, that we would just never forget that you're a good dad and we're your little buddy in Jesus name. Amen.